



VOL. XVIII.

AUGUSTA, MAINE, THURSDAY MORNING,

MARCH 14, 1850.

NO. 11.



Our Home, our Country, our Brother Man.

Before the Times and Behind the Times.

Some people seem to be ahead of their times, as the saying is: Such are always advancing theories and advocating improvements which the great mass of the community either do not believe, or cannot understand. They are therefore subject to ridicule, and left to struggle on in their enterprises alone and unaided. They generally spend their property in experimenting on their favorite projects, and, if they have not enough to enable them to succeed, they die poor. Many of the most important aids to the industry of the present day are the results of the researches of men who were ahead of their times, who spent their lives in the struggle against ridicule and poverty, and died penniless.

A few more fortunate persons, taking up their principles and discoveries, succeeded in accomplishing what they began, and arose to eminence and wealth. In our own country, numerous instances may be brought forward to prove our position: John Fitch, the first projector and inventor of the steamboat; Oliver Evans, the inventor of the high pressure engine; Charles Newbold, the inventor of the cast-iron plough.

Of this last personage farmers should think often, especially when, with a well trained team and a smoothly turning cast-iron plough, they lay over the gleaming furrows of a fertile soil. They should think of Charles Newbold of New Jersey, who, history saith, as early as 1797, obtained a patent for a cast-iron plough. He spent, it is said, in experiments and efforts to get his plough introduced, an estate of \$20,000, became poor and discouraged, his reason became deranged and he ended his days in an asylum. Why did he not succeed better? He was before his time. He was bold enough to break through the trammels of custom and tradition; to think for himself; to act for himself; to introduce a new-fangled implement, and not only new-fangled, but made of a new material. "Twas too great a stride for the plodding, cautious farmers of that day, and they left him to spend his energies and his property for their good without so much as a helping hand, a cheering word, or a hearty God bless you for his services and his sacrifices. But now, every body uses a cast-iron plough—fortunes have been made by the manufacture of them—every body likes them, and we have heard farmers wonder who it was that first started the idea of making a plough of cast-iron. Next to him came Jethro Wood, who made improvements in the cast-iron plough, and spent a life time in continuing his improvements, and in efforts to introduce them, but to very little profit as far as he was individually concerned. Congress, by renewing his patent, gave some benefit to his children.

There was also Josiah Dutcher, who, as an exchange paper says, "spent the prime of his life and all of his means in perfecting this chief agricultural implement. He met with many discouragements. He carried about a sad if not a broken heart." We need not multiply instances of this class of persons.

Of the latter class—the behinders—we have enough in every community. They are the followers of humanity, always prophesying evil against improvements and always lifting up their hands in holy horror at those who are willing to enquire into the action of principles already known, the cause of obstacles not yet surmounted, and any sacrifice of time or money, a labor that any one may devote to the removing of those obstacles and the development of new principles in such a way as to bring into successful and profitable practice. Like the dog in the manger, they are unwilling to move out of the old track themselves, or let others.

There may be occasionally an instance where this ultra conservative spirit may be of service. It is, however, giving way; and the present generation are less inclined to ridicule any new project that is brought forward, and more inclined to test it by what natural laws are known, and risk it to develop any that are not known. Reasoning is taking the place of sneering at the present day—more reliance on philosophical principles, and less on *vaishcraft*. This is as it should be. Extremes are not always right, and should be examined carefully and candidly before being rejected, because there must always be extremes. Examine them closely, save what is good and rational, and reject kindly what is erroneous. The pioneers should receive rational encouragement, and the laggards should receive rational stimulus. The ardor of the one should be gently restrained, the apathy of the other kindly rebuked. In this way the whole army of progress would be kept more compactly together. Those who are ahead, would suffer less in the expenditure of labor and means in opening the way—those behind, would suffer less from their unwillingness to avail themselves of that way.

**Do Sandy Lands leach the Manures through them?**  
This question has heretofore caused considerable discussion among farmers, but there have been no very accurate experiments to settle the question. It is however well settled that such kinds of soils as are sandy and porous do not retain manures so long, or, in other words, need manuring often than those which contain a large quantity of clay. This may not be owing to the manure dissolving by the rain, trickling through the soil, and passing off out of the way. It is a common remark that warm, sandy soils feel the manure quicker, and that the first crop after the manure is applied is larger than the same manure would cause, in a retentive soil, no more fertile than the sandy soil.

In the last number of the Working Farmer, the editor has some remarks upon the subject of rendering sands retentive, by adding clay, which we copy in part. "It is a common error," says he, "to suppose that in sandy loams manures in solution leach downwards, and thus during the growth of a single crop a full manuring seems to pass from the soil. The facts are, that free sandy loams, when containing manures ploughed under but a few inches, receive the atmosphere, dew, heat of the sun, &c., very freely, and hence the manures are decomposed more rapidly than they can be decomposed by plants, and the organic manures pass off into the gaseous form and escape into the atmosphere, while the inorganic portions in solution sink down to undesirable depths. To correct this evil without rendering the soil more difficult to work, we have only to add large portions of carbonaceous matters, such as charcoal dust or tan bark, decomposed peat, decomposed sawdust, burnt bones, after being used by the sugar refiners, &c. &c. Any, or all these ingredients, will render sandy soils retentive of manures without altering them into soils more difficult of tillage, and after a sufficient quantity of carbonaceous matters have been added, they will last in the soil fifty years, re-performing their office of retaining the gases until wanted for the use of plants, to each new manuring; and during the whole time will assist in retaining new portions of ammonia from the atmosphere, which clay alone would not do. If these carbonaceous matters be added to the manures in compost, they will retain all their parts which might otherwise be lost during decomposition; nor does the benefit end here, for if six bushels of common salt be added to the acre, the sandy loam will be rendered sufficiently retentive of moisture and free from grubs and wire worms, nor will the inorganic constituents of manures filter down and pass beyond the point of use as readily as in these manures were not in the soil.

To prove this fact, fill a tub with sandy loam, containing fair portions of carbonaceous matters, throw upon the top of it one thousand gallons of water in which ten pounds of potash or soda have been dissolved—let the water leach through the soil in the tub and run out at the bottom—then evaporate the water to dryness, and it will be found that the alkali is not in the water, but remains in the soil. Make a similar experiment with the soil simple, without the carbonaceous matters, and the alkali will be found in the water."

**Plank Roads—No. 1.**  
The New Tribune of January 19th, gives the following information about Plank Roads:—"Our State is now adding immensely to her facilities of intercourse by means of plank roads. Utica, Oswego, and perhaps Rome, have hitherto taken the lead in their construction, but they are fast becoming all but universal. They are probably not less than one thousand miles in aggregate extent at present, and are becoming rapidly extended. When wisely located, they pay liberal dividends to their stockholders, while their advantages to the public may thus be elucidated: Over the old roads, a teamster, span of horses and wagon loaded, in good going, transport one ton thirty-five miles per day, at a net average cost of \$2.50. In bad weather the load must be much smaller, or the distance traversed would be less. On a plank road, the same team will transport two tons and a half forty miles at least per day in all seasons, at a cost, including tolls, of \$3.12, or less than half the former expense. New villages are springing up, and old ones are being renovated by plank roads. They form important feeders to Railroads, and obviate the stagnations of business hitherto attendant on foul weather. In short, they are roads that the people of any section, even half settled, can make without calling on distant capitalists for aid; they are constructed of timber not otherwise valuable; mainly by labor when it is least needed; and, after sacrifice of time or money, a labor that any one may devote to the removing of those obstacles and the development of new principles in such a way as to bring into successful and profitable practice. Like the dog in the manger, they are unwilling to move out of the old track themselves, or let others.

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#### Farm Statement.

The following statement, which we copy from the Transactions of the Essex County Agricultural Society for 1849, is valuable, not only for the hints on agricultural pursuits, which it contains, but for the moral lesson which it presents to those who are timid and lack perseverance and courage, when beset with difficulties. [Ed.]

**To the Committee on Farms:**  
GENTLEMEN.—Having been favored with a visit from the Committee on Farms, and requested by them to make a statement of facts relating to my place, it is with pleasure I comply with their request. I suppose their attention was attracted to it by the peculiar circumstances under which I have labored, in bringing a barren piece of land to its present fertility. I will briefly state the particulars. At the age of thirteen years I became a cripple, by a white swelling on my knee, which caused me to lose the use of that joint. At first I got about upon crutches; afterwards with only a cane, and finally without the aid of either. And whilst I was buoyed up with the hope of again getting well of my lameness, or nearly so, I was afflicted with a paralytic stroke, which caused me to lose the use of the other leg suddenly. This took place in 1831, when at the age of 22 years; since that time I have not been able to walk one step. At first this affliction seemed to dishearten me, and I came near giving up in dismay. But hope predominated, and I made a vigorous effort to obtain a livelihood by my own industry. Not having any trade, I commenced closing shoes. By applying myself very closely to my business, working early and late, I succeeded in obtaining a sufficient sum of money to purchase one acre and sixty rods of land, near Methuen village. With a little assistance I soon had a house on the same, into which my parents moved in the fall of 1836.

This piece of land, although but small, has a variety of soil, viz. a gravelly yellow loam, or clay soil, rather moist, and a swampy very wet, with much eighteen inches deep on an average, with a clay and sandy bottom. The swamp was covered with a thick growth of alders. The upland appeared to be almost filled or paved, with small stones. The whole lot was a very bad looking piece of land. In the spring of 1839, the stones were picked off the upland, and it was ploughed for the first time, which threw up as many more small stones as had already been picked off. The alders were cut from the swamp, and a ditch dug through the same to drain it. I then undertook to plough the wet or swamp land with six oxen; but they did little more than merely tear it up in spots, there being so many roots. It was so bad I concluded not to cultivate it.

At this time I built a shop adjoining my house, from which I could see to any part of my little farm, and give directions about the work without leaving the shop. Having but limited means, and not being able to do much on the land myself, I made but slow progress in improvements. I commenced a ditch six feet from the ploughed or upland, and run it around the swamp on three sides, six feet wide and eighteen inches deep, and threw the muck upon the space between the ditch and upland, which gave me six feet more in width to my upland around the meadow. This looked well, and I was not content to stop here. According to the Yankee motto, thinking I best to keep moving, the following year I filled the ditch with stones at the bottom, then gravel, then loam, until it was filled even with the surface of the swamp. Then I cut another ditch around the swamp, directly beside the one that I had filled up, and threw the mud on the same, which added six feet more, or twelve feet in all, to the upland on three sides of the swamp. A gain filled the ditch as before, and threw the muck from another upland. I pursued this course until the whole swamp was reclaimed, which raised the surface eighteen inches higher than it was before. I then removed more than half of the muck to the upland in its place. Then by ploughing, the loam and muck were well mixed. I have an open drain leading through the meadow, from the spring by the hill, to a drain by the road; thus the meadow is rendered dry enough for any kind of cultivation.

This method could not be practised as a general rule, with regard to economy, in reclaiming wet land. I had good reasons (or thought I had) for reclaiming my own in this way. In the first place, it was but a small piece, near the house, and a convenient place for a garden. I wished to make it myself, and add to the scenery about the garden. Having but limited means, and keeping within those limits, I made but very slow progress, and was three or four years reclaiming my meadow. The stone, gravel, &c., was wheeled on a wheelbarrow from five to fifteen rods. The cost of reclaiming the meadow in this way was about \$3 to the square rod, or \$450 to the acre. But I must charge the upland with half of that amount; for every load used to raise the meadow was taken out of the way from the meadow at the rate of \$240 per acre.

In the year 1841, I received a few fruit trees of choice kinds, from a nursery near Boston, which was the commencement of my setting fruit trees; and from this date I made it my practice to set a few trees each year, of the best varieties. The more I studied into the art of gardening and growing fruit trees, the more lively interest I took in the same—not more for the profit than for the beauty of the scenery, to make home the more sweet. In 1843, I transplanted to a row by themselves, a few small apple trees, that had come up spontaneously about my place; and the following year I pursued the same course, at which time the row numbered about one hundred thirty trees. In 1845, the largest of these I had grafted, and at the present time one of these trees has fruit on it, being only six years from seed, and four from graft.

In 1846, I concluded to commence a small nursery of fruit trees. Having previous to this obtained Downing's work on Fruit and Fruit trees, and also Thomas's and Kenrick's upon the same subject, I had studied their manner of treating fruit trees, both in the nursery and as standards, and could fancy much pleasure in the same. At this time I sowed seed of various kinds, and bought a few seedlings suitable to bud the succeeding summer. My meadow being now about completed and made dry, it gave me more room to extend my nursery. In the spring of 1847, I grafted a few apple trees on the root with good success, and the following July commenced bud-

ding for the first time. At the present time I have my land so completely covered with trees, that I am forced to convey the dressing to it in a wheelbarrow.

Although I can do but little in the nursery myself, I usually go into it every day, (upon the wheelbarrow) and see what is in the most need of being done, and lay out the work for the day. Sometimes I work there myself by getting upon my hands and knees between two rows of trees, and trim or weed them as I creep along. Sometimes I bud a few trees myself, but it being rather inconvenient for me to do this work, I consider it better to work in the shop and hire the budding done. It requires nearly all the work of one man now to attend to the nursery. The number of trees on the place at the present time is as follows:

Apple,	6787
Plum,	388
Cherry,	814
Pear,	2947
Peaches,	640
Quince,	377

Whole number, including all varieties, 11,993  
Together with a great variety of Grape Vines, Strawberry Plants, Gooseberry and Currant Bushes. The whole quantity of land cultivated is about one acre. There being about one third of an acre used for yard, buildings, &c. I raise between the rows of trees the various kinds of vegetables needful for family use.

One row of apple trees, 135 feet in length, and containing 400 trees, budded September last, now stand five and a half feet high, of the present year's growth. But to be more sure of a good growth another year I intend to transplant some of them. My apple trees have borne but little fruit yet, which I account for by the rapid growth they are making. My stone fruit trees would yield me large crops, were it not for the Curculio. I have tried many experiments to no avail, and to some with more success. I have applied salt to plum trees since I first commenced growing them, using from one to two quarts to each tree, according to its size, spreading it in March or April under the branches of each tree as far as they extended. Although there is no perceptible diminution in the ravages of Curculio on trees thus treated, yet I use salt annually, as I perceive it to be of great benefit as a fertilizer. I practice washing my trees annually with potash or strong soap-suds, and throwing dry ashes on to the trees when the dew is on them, in the morning, and an not much troubled with insects, except the Curculio, and sometimes the borer. The borer is only destroyed with knife and wire, by watching the trees.

I will here mention a successful experiment for the protection of the plum against the curculio. Last year I made two bags of old tin muslin and drew them over two limbs, about the time the fruit set. Within each of these bags I saved a few beautiful plums, and not a plum did I save on any other part of the tree. Taking courage at this good success, I bought last spring a few yards of bonnet lining which I made into bags according to the size of the limbs I wished to cover. These I drew on the limbs of several trees, some when the plums had set, and others when they were in the bloom; for I found the curculio had made their appearance while the trees were in bloom. Under each of these bags I saved plums, apricots and nectarines, upon limbs of twelve different trees; and these were the only ones I saved this year. The first of August I removed the bags, the curculio having disappeared. Some may think this would be too expensive, but I think not. The muslin would last many years; and by training the trees, or the branches in the right form, they might easily be covered, to the profit of the fruit grower. Be this as it may, I have found it of great use to me, as I had bought a variety of choice plum trees, from which I did not like to lose buds and grafts, until I had proved the fruit. This I have accomplished. One small branch, covered by a bag measuring six and a half by nine inches, contained twenty-one beautiful plums, hanging in one solid cluster, causing the little limb to bend so much beneath its weight, as to require a prop to support it. Upon another tree (the Moorpark apricot) I saved eight apricots, under a very small bag. I am training some apricots and other trees in the form of a fan, to make them the more convenient to be covered with the muslin.

I would here mention that I have this summer been using refuse tobacco with good success in driving away the insects. On throwing the dust, or snuff, into the tree, we can see the rose bugs and other insects leave the tree immediately. I also use it under the roots of peach trees for the borer. Until within two or three years, the only manure used by me has been the compost made in the summer, as follows: weeds, potato peels, and bean vines, or any other vegetable matter, mixed with sand and loam in alternate layers, when for low land; and with muck, when for upland. This heap would receive the scrapings from the yard, road-side, and also the washings from the house daily, together with some salt and lime, mixed with the manure from the pen of one hog mixed with it, has been all the manure I have used until 1846. Then I bought a cow, and in 1847 a horse; of these, about half of the manure has been used on other lands.

Although I have been many years doing what capital would have done in much less time, yet I have the satisfaction of building up my little place by my own industry; laboring under very unfavorable circumstances, without capital, and without the use of my legs. But now I am in a forest of fruit trees, planted by my own direction; and the soil drawn upon the roots by my own hands, as I sat upon the barrow or box. I can now view the works of the Almighty in the growth of these trees, and the production of their fruit.

SIMEON L. WILSON.  
Methuen, Sept. 3d, 1849.

**Wheat Bran as a Fertilizer.**  
This has been tried by several persons in Delaware with great success. It is said that a handful of the hull will double the crop corn. Care must be taken to cover the bran, before dropping the corn, or the fermentation will kill the seed if in direct contact with the bran. It is said to be equally valuable upon wheat. The matter is worth experimenting upon. It is hoped that those who try it will give us the details, for the benefit of our readers. [Am. Agriculturist.]

**Wire Fences.**  
Mr. Editor:—In the second number of the Rural New-Yorker you request information respecting wire fences from those who have tried experiments in building them. Having been early engaged in experimenting with wire for fencing, I may perhaps make some suggestions respecting them which may interest those who have had their attention called to this subject. I have tried many experiments with different sized wires, different ways of fastening them together, and of tightening them. I have also had much experience in disasters attending them, and am willing that the public should have the benefit of my experience, both in favor of and against them.

Two years ago I built a fence 21 rods long, a description of which was published in the Genesee Farmer. Last summer I built another fence of the same length, the two fences enclosing a lane from my house to the road. I have made very little alteration or improvement in the one last built, and consider the manner of building described in the Farmer to be about right. I have tried boiling the wire in oil, but think it will not pay the expense, and prefer painting. I have improved the method of tightening the wires by fixing a small, cast iron rag wheel on the end of the wooden gudgeon upon which the wire is wound, and having an iron dog to hold it to its place.

My fence has had many and severe trials during the past summer. The village crows have been unusually ravenous, owing to the severe drought, and have made almost daily attacks upon it. A field of corn, planted beside it seemed to promise them an abundant repast. They would work their heads between the two upper wires, and sometimes a half dozen of them at a time would strive their utmost to reach the corn. But they never broke through. As the corn grew, the winds caused it to lean towards the fence, so that at length it came within their reach. To prevent this, I set posts and stretched a large wire (No. 5) three feet from the ground and six feet distant from the other fence, enclosing a pretty wide lane. This was effectual. The crows owned up beat, and passed by in silence.

And now come trouble from another quarter. An Irishman's pigs, of the real razor-blade, razor breed, came to explore the new fence. Not being daunted by the rebuff which an onset upon the wires occasioned, they by constant application of their sharp noses, succeeded in pressing their way through. Tightening the lower wires and placing short posts once in five feet, succeeded in arresting their thievish anticipations of fattening upon this corn.

The last disaster which has befallen it, was occasioned by two very unruly horses. During a windy night in December, which prostrated many of the fences in the neighborhood, they escaped from pasture, and in their wanderings came against this fence. As an evidence of their propensities they were heavy poles—having a crooked poker suspended from them which would hook into the fence and arrest their progress. As they came in contact with the large wire of the side wall, it would seem they were frightened by the ringing of it, and whirled against the opposite side, and hooked under the wire with such force as to pull a cedar post six inches in diameter and set two feet in the ground. This post was thrown completely over the adjacent fence—about half the wires of which were either broken or slipped where they were lapped together. What rendered this mishap peculiarly unfortunate for the reputation of the fence, cold, freezing weather came on immediately and the fence has only been partially repaired since.

Two years experience with this kind of fence has taught me that hogs are the most difficult of all animals to be restrained by it. They have such a fixedness of purpose—such undaunted resolution under untoward circumstances—such a practical application of the Latin proverb, "*per severtatem vincit omnia*,"—that when access is apparently so easy, get through they will if possible. Horses and cattle are easily restrained by it—but if a crop of corn or wheat is grown close beside it, they will reach over or through the fence to get to it. And after having a taste, they will be constantly uneasy to get to it.

Of another thing I am convinced: that most of the failures with those who have undertaken to build wire fences, arises from their endeavoring to build them too cheaply. If the wires are not strained, and their relative distances apart maintained, the fence loses exceeding uncouth, and can only restrain very orderly animals. I fear some things more to say of wire fences, but have being tedious—therefore will say no more at present. Yours, &c., MYRON ADAMS.  
East Bloomfield, Feb. 1850.

[Rural New-Yorker.]

**Building and Building Materials.**  
The materials used for the construction of houses, are wood, brick, burnt and unburnt, iron, and stone. In the first place, I shall consider wood, that being in almost universal use throughout the country. The advantages claimed for it by its strong advocates, are, its comparative cheapness, beauty, facility of obtaining it, and the readiness with which it can be repaired. The disadvantages are, liability to decay, also to fire, subject to heat in summer, and cold in winter, its continued expense for a series of years, for repairing, painting, &c.

Here the questions naturally arise—Can the advantages claimed be sustained? And do they more than counterbalance the disadvantages? Let us weigh the matter, and then decide. First, its cheapness, to my mind, is just as "clear as mud"; for, it is my candid opinion, that most farmers, (those I mean who have their farms and buildings in decent condition,) spend as much in repairing these wooden structures, for a term of years, as would pay the interest on good stone ones. When a man sells his farm with wooden buildings upon it, such as are generally found in New England, it brings no higher price per acre, than if destitute of buildings altogether. Not so with those with stone buildings which enhance the value at once, although they may not have cost more, in the aggregate, than the wooden ones. This shows conclusively, that the farmers themselves have no confidence in their cheapness nor in their excellence.

But while I thus dwell at length on the merits of wood, I must not forget it has also corresponding demerits, as its liability to take fire, for instance. This is a very serious objection in the country, as it rarely happens that wooden buildings there once on fire are ever extinguished, owing to the scarcity of fire engines, and the combustibility of the material; and if they escape fire, the liability to decay adds a bill of expense.

Another material, unburnt bricks, has lately been made use of at the west; and a few buildings have been erected in New York. Still, the number is so small, as not to warrant a decided opinion, either for or against, if I may credit those who have built them, who consider them an excellent substitute for wood.

Bricks, for the construction of country houses, are rarely used, except in districts where they are manufactured. Furthermore, they have but few advantages over other materials. They are also objectionable on account of their readiness to absorb and retain moisture; and, without a coat of paint or some sublimed shade, outside, are, to my taste, decidedly bad, and quite out of place among the green fields of the country.











